It was the worst day in Avengers' history. The Scarlet Witch suffered a total nervous breakdown after losing control of her reality-altering powers.

In the chaos created around the breakdown, beloved Avengers Hawkeye, Ant-Man, and the Vision lost their lives.

Many of the other Avengers were hurt, both emotionally and physically. Without funding to keep going, the rest of the team quietly disbanded.

The criminal Electro is hired to infiltrate the high-tech maximum-security prison known as the Raft. He sucks all the power out of Manhattan and overloads the entire island security system, setting free eighty-seven of the most dangerous and powerful criminals on Earth. Who hired Electro to do this and who he helped to escape is a mystery.

Trapped on the prison island are S.H.I.E.L.D. Agent Jessica Drew (a.k.a. Spider-Woman), blind lawyer Matt Murdock (a.k.a. Daredevil), Murdock's partner Foggy Nelson, and Luke Cage, Hero for Hire. They have come to see the most powerful super hero in the world, the Sentry, who is rotting in a solitary basement cell because he killed his wife.

When the city goes black, Captain America is already in a black ops S.H.I.E.L.D. copter, headed toward the island. He does not realize that Spider-Man has also hitched a ride.

BREAKOUT! PART TWO

Writer: Brian Michael Bendis

Penciller: David Finch

Inkers: Danny Miki with Mark Morales

Colorist: Frank D'Armata

Letterers: Richard Starkings & Comicraft's Albert Deschesne

Assistant Editors: Nicole Wiley & Molly Lazer

Associate Editor: Andy Schmidt

Editor: Tom Brevoort

Editor in Chief: Joe Quesada

Publisher: Dan Buckley

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HUH.

OKEY DOKEY!

WELL, AS LONG AS I'VE GOT THE TIGHTS ON AND NO RIDE HOME...

SPIDER-MAN, WAIT!! LET THE S.H.I.E.L.D. AGENTS TAKE POSITION, THEN WE'LL...

I LOVE YOU LIKE A REALLY, ***REALLY*** OLDER UNCLE, CAP, BUT...

...I HAVE THIS WHOLE ***GUILT*** THING ABOUT PUTTING OTHER PEOPLE IN HARM'S WAY.

SO LET ME DO WHAT ***I*** CAN DO HERE AND ***THEN*** WE'LL--

--SEE WHAT WE NEED TO....

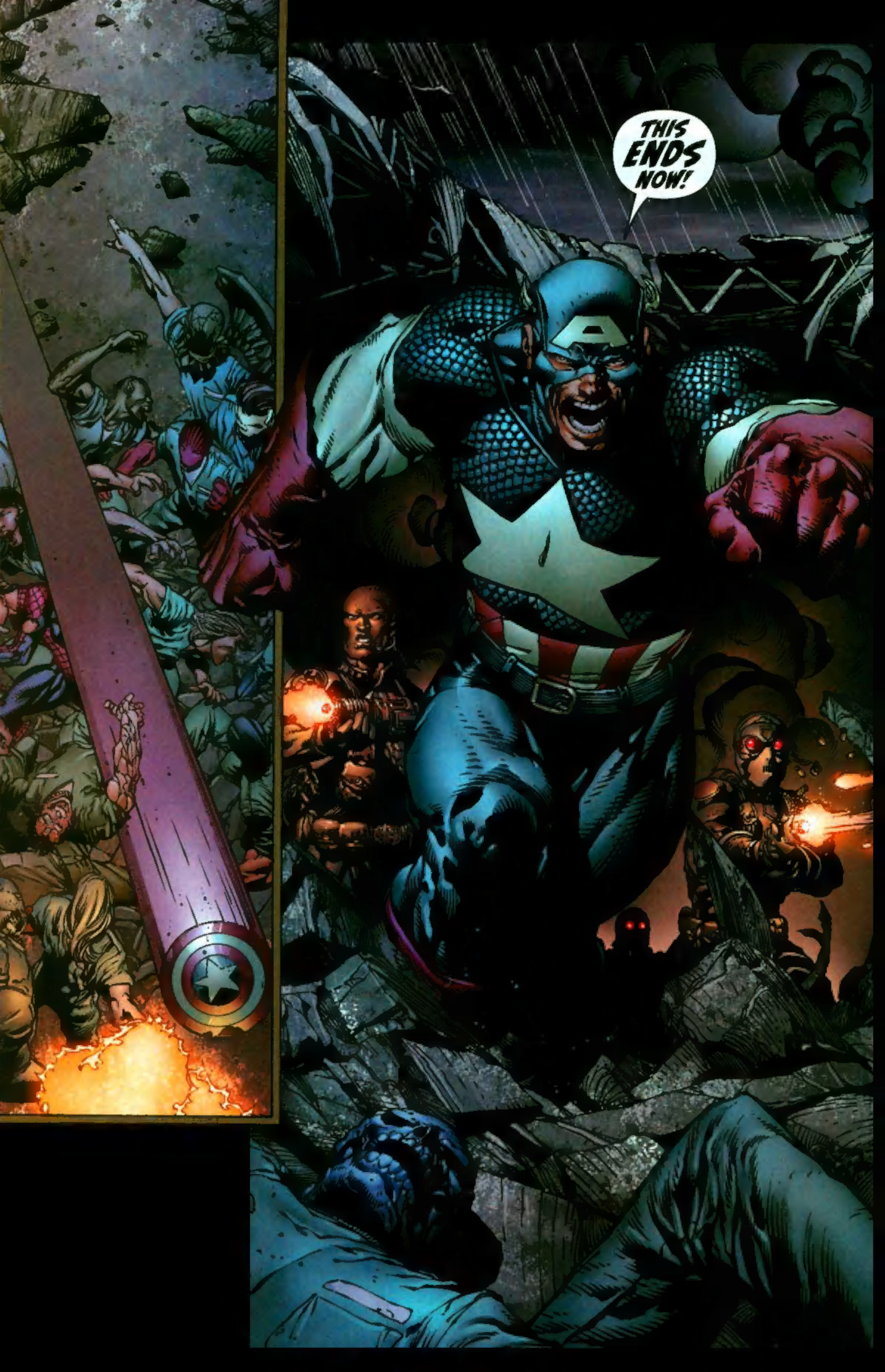
UM...

HELLO?

UH-OH...

AGH!
FSHAM
IZRRGG
FTAZZ
CCCRRKKAAKOOM
FREEDOM, FINALLY...
NNN...
COUNT LUCHINO NEFARIA
POWER SIPHON
ORGANIZED CRIME LEADER
I HAVE THE POWER TO END YOUR LIFE A THOUSAND DIFFERENT WAYS.
AND YET TODAY NOTHING COULD BE MORE SATISFYING THAN THIS.

@#@$, IT IS CHRISTMAS!!
KILL HIM!
AAGHGH!
GUYS, YOU GOTTA LET ME HAVE HIM. I GOT HISTORY HERE WITH THIS--
NO! WE NEED HIM AS A HOSTAGE! YOU WANT OUTTA HERE OR NOT?
WHO CARES ABOUT HIM? LET'S JUST GO!
STUPID MASK!
YOU REMEMBER ME, ASS?
DID WE DATE IN HIGH SCHOOL?
ALWAYS WITH THE FUNNY!
CRACK
AARRRGGHH!


THIS ENDS NOW!

YOU PUT ME HERE, MURDOCK!!
SPASH
ACTUALLY, ZABO, YOU PUT YOU HERE...
...BUT I SEE THAT YOU MIGHT NOT BE IN THE MINDSET TO SEE IT THAT WAY!
I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT THIS IS I'M FIGHTING.
IT'S CARNAGE! IT'S ONE OF SPIDER-MAN'S.
WELL, THEN GET HIM DOWN HERE!
I WOULD LOVE THAT! BUT YOU FIRST!
CRACK
GUYS, WE STILL DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT HAPPENED!
THERE'RE 87 CONVICTED FELONS IN THIS PRISON. WE HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE AND CALL FOR...
...REINFORCEMENTS...

AAGGH!
WHOOSSH

MATT MURDOCK? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
HOW DO I LOOK?
YEAH.
YOU DOING OKAY?
YOU DROPPED YOUR MASK.
NOT A GREAT CAREER MOVE!
CAPTAIN AMERICA? NOT THAT I'M NOT THRILLED TO SEE YOU--
DOES ANYONE KNOW HOW THIS STARTED?
I AIN'T THRILLED ABOUT *ANY* OF THIS!

NO, BUT YOU CAN BLAME *ME* IF YOU WANT. EVERYONE ELSE WILL.
DOESN'T MATTER. WE NEED TO CONTAIN THIS AND KEEP AS MANY AS WE CAN FROM ESCAPING!
THIS IS ALREADY A DIS--*AARGH!*
HA!
CAP!
HEY, STEVE...

AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!

Dear AVENGERS ASSEMBLE,

I flipped through the first issue of NEW AVENGERS in my comic store. It looks like a fascinating miniseries, but please bring back the AVENGERS, a book that made it to issue #500, plus 100 issues of AVENGERS WEST COAST and various limited series and spin-offs. Bring Hawkeye back from that ridiculous death. If it's possible, find someone who can undo the rape of Wanda's character. Make it so Wolverine is never a part of Earth's Mightiest Heroes. Whatever this book is--top seller, Marvel's mightiest movie heroes, Bendis' favorites--it's not the AVENGERS.

Jacob W. Michaels
Macungie, PA

Okay, let me clear this up right now. WOLVERINE IS NOT, NOR HAS HE EVER BEEN, A MEMBER OF THE AVENGERS. There. Everyone happy now? Everyone got his or her breath back? Good. Although, now that I think about it, he is on the alternate cover for next issue...

And on a side note, I'm sorry you feel the way you do, Jacob, but this IS the AVENGERS.

Dear Marvel,

I've been reading comic books for over 20 years now, and I have to say that the "Disassembled" storyline is one of the worst things I've ever read. It's up there with the Spider-Man "Clone Saga." Anti-climactic, unnecessary, and ridiculous are words that come to mind. I like most of Bendis' work, but this is unoriginal. The Scarlet Witch goes crazy once again? How many times does that have to happen?

Marvel seems to have a problem with powerful women. In the FF we've got the Invisible Woman and Malice, X-Men, Jean Grey and Dark Phoenix. But back to Avengers. I'd rather have seen Dr. Doom, The Masters of Evil, anyone. Scarlet Witch is so powerful she's warped reality yet again. This was stupid and a waste of my hard-earned money. I think Marvel might owe me a refund for reading this story arc. When Bendis and Morrison started doing their Marvel stuff, I expected new, fresh stories. What we're getting are retellings of stuff I read as a kid.

If you need new ideas or stories, ask me. I know I can come up with something better than the 5 months of regurgitated ideas that I just read.

Louis Willis
via e-mail

Wow. Tough crowd. Just wondering, but wouldn't doing The Masters of Evil or Dr. Doom be just as much a retread? As for powerful women, I give you Storm, Elektra, Black Widow, Rogue, Mary Jane Watson-Parker, Black Cat, and Emma Frost. But about Avengers, you want NEW, you want BOLD—keep reading, because as you can see, we've got a NEW lineup, NEW foes, and coming up, a NEW headquarters and NEW tactics. So--stay tuned!

Dear AVENGERS ASSEMBLE,

I hope there will be some retribution visited upon the Wasp. I don't hate Jan, but she really has a lot to answer for. She's always been a callous, unthinking woman. Remember, around the same time (in WEST COAST AVENGERS) when Wanda first lost her children, Jan was in favor of Simon putting the moves on Wanda. In fact, she actively encouraged him! And Wanda and Vision were still married!

Bob Gomez
Bronx, NY

Dude, she was in critical condition. Why you gotta be an Avenga-hata'?

Dear Disassemblers,

After reading Avengers #503, I have a bugging question. In which reality does "Chaos" take place? As in the current X-Men titles, Magneto is secretly in Genosha. In issue #503, Magneto and Beast appeared in costumes akin to the Grant Morrison run. Wanda and Pietro seem to be okay just prior to X-Men's recent Reload. Great story but is continuity not important anymore these days?

Muhammad Maaya
Manchester, England

Magneto has been in hiding, but his daughter's troubles were horrible enough to force him to reveal himself to the world. You'll learn more in upcoming issues of EXCALIBUR. All continuity all the time, that's our motto.

Dear BMB and crew,

I can't believe what you guys have done. I just finished reading AVENGERS FINALE and you know what? This is THE best issue I have ever read from Bendis. Having so many artists gave such a unique touch to the book that it was just moving. I honestly felt sad and moved from the issue. I can't believe that the book also had me shed a tear. Yes, a 17-year-old guy shed a tear from this issue. I mean, who wouldn't with an ending like the one in this book? I absolutely loved the memory flashbacks. The art that went with each one was perfect. You guys could not have picked better artists. The ending of the book, the crowd with the signs and the candle lights, that's a scene that will be in my mind for a long time. I loved this book so much, and all my friends that got it loved it too. I hope Bendis and the crew keep at it. Here's to everyone who worked on this book. Here's to the gone, but not forgotten, Avengers. May all the Avengers live on in peace. Thank you, Marvel. Thank you very much.

Luis Casiano
Bridgeport, CT

SWEET! One Fan! We've got ONE FAN!

Dear Marvel,

I have been through several decades with you guys.

I have witnessed the deaths of Gwen Stacy, Captain Mar-Vell and recently, my all-time favorite hero, Clint Barton...Hawkeye. I have been very emotional, even moved sometimes, by these stories but never have I actually shed tears.

In AVENGERS FINALE I wept. I felt as though I was in the room with those heroes. I felt the bittersweet remembrances, could actually imagine the suppressed sobs and laughs as they spoke about their fallen comrades.

The finality of it all. The Avengers have been a part of my family for close to 27 years. Thank you for giving the old team a closure deserving of the dignity and reverence they earned.

Ben Sanborn
Westbrook, ME

TWO FANS! WE ROCK!

Goodbye, Marvel.

I will never again buy a new Marvel comic. This has been building for a long time. But "Chaos" was the last straw. Joe Quesada and Brian Michael Bendis can continue to rip up the Marvel Universe. I will no longer be buying it.

I am 39 years old and usually drop $150 a month on comics. AVENGERS #143, the Death of Kang, was the first book I kept. I had bought some comics before but #143 was the one that cemented my love for comics. Except for Avengers 1-6, and 10, I have acquired all the issues.

NEW AVENGERS #1 without Wanda, Clint, Janet, Vision, and Simon will go the way of the BBC's *The New Avengers* with John Steed but without Emma Peel.

The soul of Marvel Comics is now dead. All that's left is a soulless machine that wants to produce "HOT" #1 issues every 6 months.

The spirit of Kirby and Lee is dead.

Raul S. Sanchez
Santa Fe Springs, CA

You seem to have an incredible understanding of Kirby and Lee's spirits, and they are fortunate to have you championing on their behalf. Sorry you don't like the new stuff, Raul, but that's your opinion and can stand up as that. You don't need to bring in Jack Kirby and Stan Lee. Stan can speak for himself, and Jack probably doesn't need his opinion handed to him. You don't like it, cool. I hope you find another book that you're enjoying now.

As we've seen on this very letters page, not everyone will like NEW AVENGERS. And that's okay. We're thrilled you're all trying it out and feel compelled to write in. Bendis is doing everything he can to make sure you're going to be entertained for years to come. Finch is beating himself up to bring the best in super-hero action each and every month. Danny is an absolute perfectionist, and Frankie D. is holding everyone together.

I'd like to give a special thanks to Mark Morales for a little help on this issue when Danny got sick. Danny, we all hope you're feeling much better.

'Til next time, see you in the funny books.

--NEW Andy

NEXT ISSUE:

NEW AVENGERS #3

VARIANT EDITION

NICOLE WILEY & MOLLY LAZER
ASST. EDITORS

ANDY SCHMIDT
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

TOM BREVOORT
EDITOR

JOE QUESADA
CHIEF

AVENGERS ASSEMBLE c/o MARVEL COMICS
10 EAST 40TH ST., NEW YORK, NY 10016

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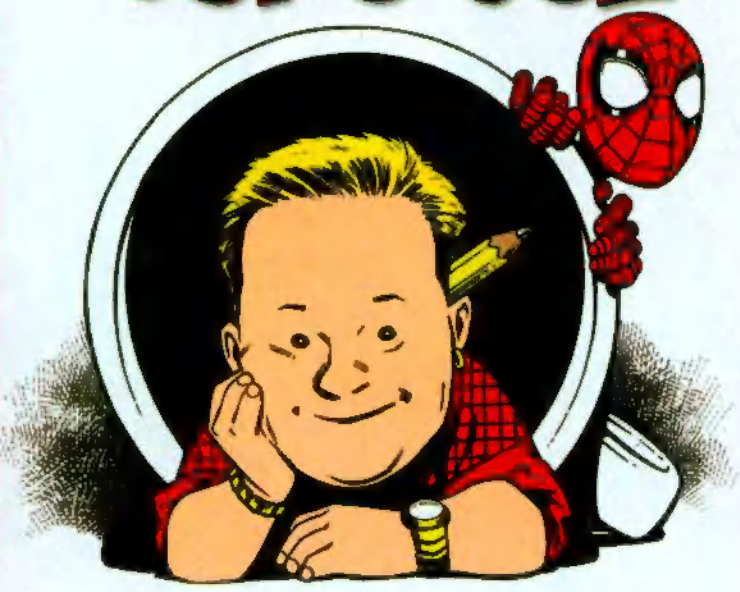
CUP O' JOE



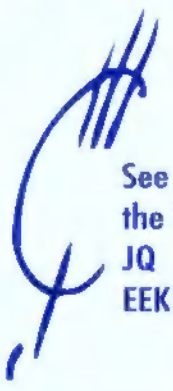
HEY, GANG, *I'm back!*

Welcome to my new "Cup O' Joe" soapbox! As always this column will be dedicated to helping guide you, our marvelous Marvel True Believer, to the coolest comic consumables currently crashing comic shops near you!!!

This month begins a little initiative we're calling "Marvel Next." What's "Marvel Next" you ask? Well, in this and subsequent months we'll be focusing on some next generation Marvel characters who we feel will in short time become major new staples within the Marvel Universe. This month we're focusing on the extremely popular X-23...

Ripped from the pages of the unbelievably popular NYX series and out of the world of Uncanny X-Men leaps X-23 into her first solo book. This mini series written by Craig Kyle and Christopher Yost and illustrated by Billy Tan will set the record straight about this young lady who is quickly becoming the "it" character in the world of X-Men. This book is going to be *pistol hot!*

Speaking of heat, I have to mention a few white hot creators this month, who will be affecting some familiar faces. We've got famed Brit scribe Peter Milligan taking over X-Men, the Hulk-Man himself, Peter David taking over, well... The Hulk, and Greg Pak and Greg Land on Phoenix Endsong! Phew, that's a lot of incredible talent, how do you guys deal with it all, I'm exhausted.



See ya in
the funnybooks,
JQ
EEK!

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